

## HOT AIR BAKING ALASKA

• Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask that the following article be printed in the RECORD.

The article follows:

[From the Washington Times, June 9, 1995]

## HOT AIR BAKING ALASKA

(By Alston Chase)

Our helicopter swooped down on a black bear that was lazily grazing lush grass beside a crystal clear mountain river. Around him, I could see an intense green mosaic of meadows and, beyond them, thick forests that stretched to the skyline, where dark peaks loomed through the mist.

I was flying over the Thorne River on Prince of Wales Island in Southeast Alaska's Tongass National Forest—a stream that in April the conservation group American Rivers, claiming that "extensive logging" would harm "potentially threatened" creatures, designated one of the country's "most endangered" rivers.

But environmentalists, I discovered, had things backward. Prince of Wales, which has been extensively logged, is thriving. By contrast, more than 96 percent of the Tongass remains untouched, yet is dying.

For more than a decade, various groups have insisted that the Tongass, "America's rain forest," is in deep trouble due to unprincipled logging. I found that while this region is indeed at risk, the culprit is conservationism. The Thorne, in particular, is flourishing.

Contrary to activist claims, the Forest Service manages it as a "Scenic and Recreational River" and plans no logging there, except in a tiny portion of one tributary. Where harvests are under consideration, they would be prohibited within a half-mile of any stream. And although 21 percent of the drainage has already been logged—much of it long ago—pink salmon runs have risen from lows of 300 in the 1960s to highs of 350,000 in the 1990s.

This reveals what foresters know: that in this land which annually receives 160 inches of rain and where trees grow like weeds, logging can be nature's best friend. Properly harvested, these forests could grow at the rate of 1.35 billion board feet a year. But left alone, they are dying. Meanwhile, the lack of cutting ensures few recreational opportunities are available for ordinary people. Dotted with muskeg swamps, littered with deadfall and covered with a solid curtain of densely packed trees, the land is nearly impenetrable. Only the super-rich can afford the helicopters needed to reach camping and fishing spots in its interior.

That is what makes Prince of Wales different. Thanks to logging, it is experiencing phenomenal tree growth and has a wonderful road and trail network that puts the lakes and streams within reach of hikers.

Unfortunately, such accessibility displeases the scions of Grosse Pointe and the Barons of the Beltway, whose largess and appetite for power sustains the environmental movement. These elite prefer to keep the Tongass so remote its choice spots can only be reached by qualified governmental authorities or refined persons such as themselves, who have access to, or can afford, guides and helicopters. So to make their playground safe from democracy, they successfully lobbied and litigated to reduce harvest plans until, today, cutting approaches zero.

Of the Tongass' 17 million acres, 10 million are forested, and of that 5.7 million are accessible for "commercial" forestry. In 1980, federal legislation set aside around 1.6 million of this as wilderness. After the 1990 Tongass Timber Reform Act and other con-

servation measures, only 1.71 million was left for logging. And 400,000 of that was second-growth that could not be ready to cut for 40 years. Now, the Clinton administration has invoked the Endangered Species Act to create Habitat Conservation Areas totaling 600,000 acres of the remainder for "potentially endangered species."

Thus, of the Tongass' 17 million acres, 600,000 is actually available for logging. In a forest that grows more than a billion board feet annually, loggers last year cut a mere 276 million. And as harvests plummet, mills close and unemployment rises. In 1989, the pulp mill in Sitka ran out of logs and closed its doors, and last winter, the saw mill in Wrangell went belly up for the same reason. And while Alaska's congressmen promise to open the forest, the citizens of this region are not optimistic. They have heard that kind of talk before.

Citizens of the Tongass are victims of phoney science that supposes mythical "ecosystem health" is more important than people; of preservation laws that provide lush grazing for activist attorneys; of shark pack activists who ride piggyback on each others' media campaigns, repeating half-truths until the public believes them; of federal subsidies to groups who sue "to protect the environment;" of public ignorance and activist propaganda; of media arrogance and government's inexorable urge to grow.

They wonder when America will learn the truth: that without logging, trees die and people suffer. Without logging, the Tongass will remain an exclusive preserve of the affluent or anointed, who don't deserve it.

They know this is a national outrage. But they wonder: Does anyone in Washington care?•

#### THE DISASTER VICTIMS CRIME PREVENTION ACT OF 1995

• Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, shortly after the Senate returns from the Fourth of July recess, I plan to introduce the Federal Disaster Preparedness and Response Act of 1995. This bill will be very similar to the measure I offered in the 103d Congress with Senator GLENN and GRAHAM of Florida.

It is very appropriate to announce my intention to reintroduce this legislation as we debate the conference report on the supplemental disaster bill. We are all aware of the tremendous costs incurred during a natural disaster. What many of us are unaware of is the need to combat fraud against victims of Federal disasters. The legislation I plan to introduce would make it a Federal crime to defraud persons through the sale of materials or services for cleanup, repair, and recovery following a federally declared disaster.

Because of instant media coverage of the destruction caused by these catastrophic events, we are able to see first-hand the concern of others, such as Red Cross volunteers passing out blankets and food and citizens traveling hundreds of miles to help rebuild strangers' homes.

Despite the outpouring of public support that follows these catastrophes, there are unscrupulous individuals who prey on trusting and unsuspecting victims. This measure would criminalize some of the activities undertaken by these unprincipled people whose sole

intent is to defraud hard-working men and women.

Every disaster has examples of individuals who are victimized twice—first by the disaster and later by unconscionable price hikes and fraudulent contractors. In the wake of the 1993 Midwest flooding, Iowa officials found that some vendors raised the price of portable toilets from \$60 a month to \$60 a day! In other flood-hit areas, carpet cleaners hiked their prices to \$350 per hour, while telemarketers set up telephone banks to solicit funds for phony flood-rated charities.

Nor will television viewers forget the scenes of beleaguered South Floridians buying generators, plastic sheeting, and bottled water at outrageous prices in the aftermath of Hurricane Andrew.

After Hurricane Iniki devastated the Island of Kauai, a contractor promising quick home repair took disaster benefits from numerous homeowners and fled the area without completing promised construction.

While the Stafford Natural Disaster Act currently provides for civil and criminal penalties for the misuse of disaster funds, it fails to address contractor fraud. To fill this gap, my legislation would make it a Federal crime to fraudulently take money from a disaster victim and fail to provide the agreed upon material or service for the cleanup, repair, and recovery.

The Stafford Act also fails to address price gouging. Although it is the responsibility of the States to impose restrictions on price increases prior to a Federal disaster declaration, Federal penalties for price gouging should be imposed once a disaster has been declared. I am pleased to incorporate in this measure an initiative Senator GLENN began following Hurricane Andrew to combat price gouging and excessive pricing of goods and services.

There already is tremendous cooperation among the various State and local offices that deal with fraud and consumer protection issues and it is quite common for these fine men and women to lend their expertise to their colleagues from out-of-State during a natural disaster. This exchange of experiences and practical solutions has created a strong support network.

However, a Federal remedy is needed to assist States when a disaster occurs. There should be a broader enforcement system to help overburdened State and local governments during a time of disaster. The Federal Government is in a position to ensure that residents within a federally declared disaster area do not fall victim to fraud. Federal agencies should assist localities to provide such a support system.

In addition to making disaster-related fraud a Federal crime, this bill would also require the Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to develop public information materials to advise disaster victims about ways to detect and avoid fraud. I have seen a number of anti-fraud material prepared by State consumer protection